



FATHER SEELOS AND SANCTITY

VOLUME XIX, NUMBER 8

AUGUST, 1985

BLESSED BE HER GLORIOUS ASSUMPTION



Assumption of the Virgin

BARTOLOME MURILLO (1618-1682)

What a day it must have been in heaven when Mary was reunited with her Son, Jesus. There must have been much rejoicing.

In St. Mary's Assumption Church here in New Orleans, the high altar depicts this beautiful scene. Father Seelos' tomb is in the shadow of this altar. This altar has been an inspiration to the priests and parishioners for many, many years.

Pray to Mary on this beautiful feast, which is celebrated on August 15. Pray that more people will come to St. Mary's to pray before the tomb of Father Seelos for his canonization.

A little aside. Never underestimate the value of a kind word, a little compliment. Yesterday while I was deliberating as to whether or not I would write this letter or tell Father Elworthy I was not able to do it this time, a very old friend called me and gave me a sort of pep-talk. Then I made my decision and here I am again coming into your home. Keep up your prayers to Mary. She will go to her Son for you. Please continue to remember me in your prayers. I love you all. God bless you!

Josie M. Becker

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Virtue: HUMILITY

Patron: St. Bartholomew, Apostle

Text: "Learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble of heart." (Matt. 11/29)

In regard to this virtue of humility, it is good to remember that Jesus is the model. St. Paul tells us in his letter to the Philippians (2/5-8): "Your attitude must be that of Christ: though, He was in the form of God, He did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather, He emptied Himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men...it was thus He humbled Himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross."

Being rich, Jesus became poor, being the Creator, He became a creature and accepted even death. We, human creatures, are ennobled by His gift of Himself to us. He became one with us in all things save sin.

St. Teresa of Avila was accustomed to say that humility is truth. The element of truth in humility is so important. We are not surprised when Jesus, the God-man, claims that He and the Father are one. Jesus is not bragging. He is telling the truth. Jesus is truly divine.

During His lifetime on earth Jesus told us the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector. One day they both went to the Temple to pray. The Pharisee took a prominent position and began to regale the Lord with his good points. He concluded, "I give thanks to you, O God, that I am not like the rest of men...or even like this tax collector." The tax collector, at a distance, did not even raise his eyes to heaven. He beat his breast and prayed, "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner." (Luke 18/9-14). We all know which one of the two received a hearing from God.

Father Seelos was a humble man. It is sufficient to quote the opinion of the chronicler of events in the Redemptorist community in New Orleans. This opinion was given a short twelve months before his death; "September 28, 1866: today at 8:15 P.M. Rev. Father Francis Seelos, for twenty years superior of our Congregation, at one time consultor to the provincial and rector in Baltimore, superior and prefect of students in Cumberland (Maryland), in Annapolis rector, then superior of the missions, arrived here as a simple Father, to join in the labors which God has allotted to our care. With joy he received the command of his superiors, and he seems more as a novice than an old Father, so desirous is he of being led then leading. His example confounds us and makes us wish we had been better and humble and more really Redemptorists."

To be truly humble means to be coldly objective. To be humble means we must look at ourselves, not as we may appear in the sight of others, not as we appear even to ourselves, but as we are in the sight of God. We must be forever grateful to the Lord for the gifts He has given us, the talents we were born with, the family that bought us into the world, the circumstances and environment we were reared in. St. Paul reminded the Corinthians as we must remind ourselves: "Name something you have that you have not received. If then you have received it, why are you boasting of it as if it were your own?" (1 Cor. 4/7)

Joseph Elworthy, C.S.S.R

SPECIAL LETTER

Woldorf, Md.

Dear Father:

My daughter was having a sickle cell crisis. She was taken to Hotel Dieu. Her blood count was unusually low. They did a spinal tap. On Sept. 25, 1984 she was given the sacrament of the sick. Karen had aspirated, gone into respiratory arrest and was comatose. I was told she had very serious brain damage and that she might not regain consciousness.

She began to have seizures; she started what the doctors called 'decebrate posturing.' This is really when they feared the worst and said extensive brain damage. I believed that God would help the doctors and nurses to do their work and the final decision was His alone.

My Nan came to New Orleans on Friday or Saturday. This was the first time I came to know about Father Seelos. She asked me to pin the memento on Karen's gown. I did. We said the prayer all during the day. By this time from her aspirating, and being comatose, pneumonia set in which brought emphysema, surgery was done.

Sometime during all this, Father, you came with the cross. In that week Karen opened her eyes and recognized her father. At this time she could not talk or walk or had no control over body functions. She was still critical.

Two weeks later arrangements were made to have her air-evacuated to Tethesda Naval Hospital where she had a third surgery. The doctors here say her recovery has been remarkable.

Karen looks now just like she used to, walks and talks like she used to. She has dysphasia. We don't know if her memory will come back. We don't concern ourselves about that. One day at a time.

I know this letter is wordy, but I asked the Holy Spirit to help me to be accurate. I hope in some way it will serve a very good purpose.

During April we received 242 letters of petition and 334 letters of thanksgiving.

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SPECIAL NOTES

This month is filled with memorable feasts:

1. Feast of St. Alphonsus Liguori – bishop, doctor of the Church, founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (The Redemptorists).
 2. Dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome, the oldest Marian Shrine in Christendom, just a stone's throw from the Church of St. Alphonsus where hangs the original picture of our Mother of Perpetual Help.
 8. St. Dominic, founder of the Dominicans. He zealously promoted devotion to the Blessed Mother.
 14. St. Maximilian Kolbe – he gave his life for another in the concentration camps of World War II.
 15. Assumption of the Blessed Mother.
 21. St. Pius X – Promoter of frequent Communion.
 22. Queenship of Mary.
 27. St. Monica
 28. St. Augustine
 29. Martyrdom of St. John Baptist.
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We just received news of the death of Dr. Gebhard Seelos in Munich, W. Germany, on December 20, 1984. He was the West German Ambassador in Portugal, Greece and Brazil. As the oldest living relative of Father Seelos, he visited New Orleans and the tomb of his great-uncle in the early seventies. He was devoted to the cause of his holy relative. May he rest in peace.

For blessings of your sick with the mission Crucifix of Father Seelos, please call Miss Addie Buhler. 895-6176

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